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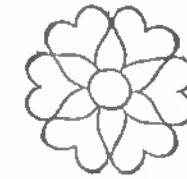
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تَقْوِيَةُ الْإِيمَانِ Taqwiyat-ul-Imân

(Strengthening of the Faith)

شاه إسماعيل شهيد
Shah Ismail Shaheed



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Publisher's Note

At a time when the general milieu in the subcontinent of India was overwhelmed by the powers of darkness, and the soundness of Faith was reeling under the potentially threatening squalls and the blinding forages of superstitions and paganism, Allah the Almighty, by dint of His special blessing, sent a personality, who, by the strength of his Faith, knowledge and rhetoric, dissipated the redoubtable forces of depravity and smashed the self-made idols of *Shirk* (polytheism) and *Bid'ah* (innovations in religion) and established the base of pure *Tauhid* (Islamic Monotheism). This great personality was Shah Ismail Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله, who was the grandson of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, a man of profound knowledge and great name to be reckoned with in terms of his authentic scholarship among the most qualified and famous celebrities of his time. The services which he has rendered for the reformation of *Ummah* and his undertaking the task of *Da'wah* (the mission of propagating Islam); especially after the previous works of Shaikhul-Islam Imam Ibn Taimiyah and Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhab, are absolutely unforgettable and shall always be cherished in our minds. His status is specially far more prominent and elevated due to the fact that he not only carried on with his struggle on the strength of his pen and tongue, but he practically joined *Tahreek-ul-Mujâhidin* (the first Islamic *Mujahid* movement) under the inspiring leadership of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed and achieved martyrdom in his armed struggle against the Sikhs at Balakot and hence set an ideal example for the weak, incapacitated and oppressed Muslims of India.

The age of Shah Ismail Shaheed was infested and contaminated with the poisonous atmosphere of *Shirk* and innovations. The

PREFACE

Shah Muhammad Ismail رحمه الله, the author of *Taqwiyat-ul-Imân* was the solitary son of Shah Abdul-Ghani رحمه الله, the grandson of Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله, and the nephew of Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith رحمه الله, Shah Rafiuddin Muhaddith رحمه الله and Shah Abdul-Qadir Muhaddith رحمه الله. In the vast Indian subcontinent, no one else other than Shah Ismail perhaps enjoys such a high and respectable pedigree in terms of knowledge and grace, teaching and instructing, writing and compiling, lecturing and prompting guidance, reinvigorating and renewing the teachings of religion, reviving Islam and reforming the *Ummah*. Very few people may have had a privilege of getting such a rich and spectacular heritage. Shah Ismail Shaheed رحمه الله not only lived up to the great reputation and enormity of his legacy, but he practically furthered its splendour manifold times and added lustre to it.

According to an authentic source, Shah Ismail رحمه الله was born on 12th Rabi'ul-Awwal 1193 H (corresponding to 26th April 1779 G). It means that he was almost seven years older than his religious preceptor and mentor, the *Amir-ul-Muminin* (the head of the believers) Saiyid Ahmad Barailawi رحمه الله. The name of his mother was Bibi Fatimah رحمه الله.^[1]

^[1] Mir Shahamat Ali, in the preface of his English translation of *'Taqwiyat-ul-Imân*, has mentioned his date of birth as 28th of Shawwal 1195 H. And has stated his mother's name as Fadeelat-un-Nisa (daughter of Moulvi Alauddin Phulti). His maternal ancestry undoubtedly belonged to Phulat and his sister Bibi Ruqaiya's first marriage to his maternal cousin Moulvi Kamaluddin did take place in Phulat itself, but the authentic statement regarding his date of birth and the name of his mother is the one which is recorded in the text. We do not know about the source of his reference. He has mentioned several other things in his biography which are incorrect.

Education & training:

Shah Sahib attained his preliminary education from his esteemed father. At the tender age of eight, he had memorized the Noble Qur'ân. On 16th of Rajab 1203 H (12th April 1789 G), Shah Abdul Ghani رحمه الله passed away while Shah Shaheed was only 10 years old. Each of his three paternal uncles (Shah Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله, Shah Rafiuddin رحمه الله and Shah Abdul-Qadir رحمه الله) were equally keen to affectionately take charge of upbringing their bereaved nephew, but this responsibility was formally shouldered by Shah Abdul-Qadir رحمه الله who himself had only one daughter. He is the one who taught the text books to Shah Ismail رحمه الله. He attained a degree of proficiency in all the prescribed subjects which were then in vogue and which were considered to be the highest standard of education one could possibly secure those days. He secured a degree of completion in the studies of *Ahadith* from Shah Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله and thus he completed his education while he was about 15 or 16 years old.

According to Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, he was so much over-confident in the very beginning stage of his studies that he would never remember as to where the lesson would really start. Sometimes he would start reading the text which immediately followed his present lesson. Whenever Shah Abdul-Qadir interrupted him such as to remind him of his actual lesson, he would answer that he avoided it since it was too easy for him, and whenever Shah Abdul-Qadir would ask him any question concerning the portion which he had skipped, he would start delivering such an eloquent lecture about it that the people around him would be taken aback by surprise. Sometimes he would start his lesson preceeding the one which he is supposed to read and when Shah Abdul-Qadir brought his attention to it, he would express such doubts that even an accomplished instructor like him would have to pay a special attention in

responding to his queries.

His extraordinary intelligence became renowned far and wide. After he had completed his formal studies, people would put direct queries to him even while he was walking on the road simply to examine him, keeping in mind the fact that so long as he did not have a book in his hand, he would not be able to give satisfactory answers to their queries. But Shah Ismail would unhesitatingly start lecturing them and provide such a detailed answer to their queries that they would be ultimately put to shame on their boldness.

Maulana Muhammad Khan Alam Madrasi has written on the authority of Maulana Saiyid Muhammad Ali Rampuri's statement that Shah Shaheed was a scholar of a very deep, profound, and authentic knowledge and had memorized the Noble Qur'ân by heart. He had thirty thousand *Ahadith* on the tip of his tongue.

Saiyid Sahib's (رحمه الله عليه) *Bai'a* (pledge):

Eventhough Shah Shaheed's fame in terms of his learning and wisdom had travelled far and wide, but he was a man of a rather carefree disposition, which means that he had not adopted an occupation on a permanent basis, the reason of which could possibly be that the activities which were practised by his family members, might have been inadequately suited for the reforming purpose according to his viewpoint, while he had no other new activity in his frame of mind. Or it could be that he would have had set his heart on a certain course of action and was only waiting in search of companions and fellows.

In 1234 H (1819 G) *Amirul-Muminin* (the head of the believers) Saiyid Ahmad Barailawy رحمه الله abandoned the company of Nawab Amir Khan, the ruler of Tounk, proceeded to Delhi from Rajputana and took residence in Akbar Abadi Mosque. The first

to take a pledge of allegiance on his hand was Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Phulti, who was presumably a grandson of Shah Ahlullah, a brother of Shah Waliullah رحمه الله. The second person to take such a pledge on his blessed hand was Maulana Abdul-Hai رحمه الله (the son-in-law of Shah Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله) and finally it was Shah Shaheed who took a pledge on his hand. Once he did it, his life underwent a total transformation. He became obsessed with the task of reformation and guidance day and night. On every Tuesday and Friday, he regularly delivered a religious lecture in Shahi Masjid (Royal Mosque). Sir Saiyid says in one of his writings that the people came to the Friday prayers in such a huge number, as if they throng the mosques for the *'Eid* prayers in the form of a massive and thundering crowd. Their number was phenomenol and innumerable. The method of his sermonising was so pleasing that whatever he said, got ingratiated in the hearts of the people and they imbibed it to the core. Even if it involved a snag or a controversial point the same was cleared away during the course of his sermon. Revival of *Sunnah* and deterring *Shirk* (polytheism) and *Bid'ah* (innovations) were the special subjects of his religious lectures. This was the time when the mission of the revival of religion commenced in full swing with all its might. This was the era about which Maulana Abul-Kalam Azad (رحمه الله) notes the following remarks in his book *Tadhkirah*:

"The secrets of (the mission of) *Da'wah* (i.e. call to Islam) and reformation of *Ummah* that were buried in the ruins of Old Delhi and the hovels and shanties of Kotla, were now being revived thanks to the involvement of the reigning sovereign, which caused a wave of consternation in the markets of Shahjahanabad and an uproar on the stairs of *Jami' Masjid* by this great and distinguished person. Not only that, the news transcended the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent but had it's repercussions far and wide. The things which the great and